

**Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network
Board of Director's Meeting
August 11, 2005
Pecos National Historical Park, Pecos, New Mexico
Chair: Dennis Ditmanson**

Attendees: D. Ditmanson, Chair of Board (PECO), K. McMurry, Board Member (FOLS), K. Brown, Board Member (LAMR), A. Miller, Board Member (WABA), B. Bingham, Board Member (IMR), D. Perkins, Board Member (SOPN), G. Willson, non-voting advisory Board Member (Great Plains CESU), G. Bowser, non-voting advisory Board Member (Gulf Coast CESU), F. Pannebaker (BEOL), T. Benson (PECO), R. Andrade (FOUN), T. Cyphers (FOLS), A. Wimer (LAMR/ALFL), P. Eubank (LAMR/ALFL), F. Revello (FOLS), J. Lott (LYJO), S. Burrough (CHIC), S. Braumiller (IMR stationed at CHIC), H. Sosinski (SOPN), K. Cherwin (SOPN-University of Colorado), T. Zettner (SOPN-Texas A+M), T. DeFex (SOPN-Texas A+M).

- I. Board of Director's Business
 - A. Two changes in the Board during the fiscal year. M. Frank was in a management/development superintendent program at FOUN and has now moved on to Fort Laramie NHS. D. Ditmanson replaced her on the Board. S. Linderer retired from FOLS in December and has been replaced by K. McMurry.
 - B. Changes for FY2006 – D. Ditmanson will be replaced by M. Johnston
 - C. **Action Item: K. Brown was elected unanimously as the Board Chair for 2006.**
- II. Evaluate and Review operational structure between SOPN and LYJO
 - A. Administrative Structure – The current arrangement between SOPN and LYJO is working well.
 - B. Administrative costs paid to LYJO
 - Last year we budgeted \$10,000 to pay for administrative costs which was reduced to \$8,500 when our budget was cut. The proposed amount is \$11,000 for next year. D. Perkins said we were getting a really good deal relative to what other networks were getting and paying. J. Lott said that the park is pleased to have the SOPN office there. **Action Item: Consensus that \$11,000 would be paid to LYJO in FY2006 to cover administrative costs.**
 - C. Supervisory Role – B. Carey was the acting network coordinator before D. Perkins was hired. At the time of D. Perkins hiring (2003), IMR I+M said that the Regional Coordinator would only supervise network coordinators if each network agreed to pay for administrative costs through the regional office. SOPN decided to have B. Carey continue to supervise the network coordinator due to his experience as acting coordinator and the desire to have SOPN pay for and receive administrative support from LYJO. The Board decided to re-evaluate this arrangement every year.

-D. Perkins noted that he has discussed this matter with B. Carey and B. Carey is happy to stay as the supervisor of the network coordinator or have it pass on to B. Bingham. B. Bingham stated that he currently supervises two network coordinators and two additional coordinators will be supervised in FY06. K. Brown asked D. Perkins what he thought.

-D. Perkins said that he had no problems with the current arrangement. One benefits of keeping the same system is that if there is a problem between SOPN and LYJO it can be fixed quickly because of the direct line supervision. Another theoretical benefit in keeping B. Carey as supervisor was that the network has more control over the coordinator and SOPN. However, this has not been a problem and there should not be a problem as B. Bingham would listen to any concerns from the Board. The negatives of the current situation is that B. Carey has less of a role in SOPN as he has in the past as he passed on some Technical Committee duties to J. Lott, and it has now been two years since he was acting coordinator. Another potential issue is that as we get to vital signs selection and monitoring, if another SOPN park or staff member has a problem with how dollars are spent, the LYJO-SOPN supervisory role could be perceived as a bias if it is perceived that LYJO got more then it deserved. D. Perkins emphasized that this has not occurred, nor does he expect it to occur.

-B. Bingham stated that the Board of Directors authority should remain the same if he becomes supervisor. This control has not been an issue with other networks.

-K. Brown asked what happens if B. Carey leaves? D. Perkins said that the supervisor arrangement would be re-evaluated at that time.

-K. McMurry stated with due respect to Brian, it does make sense to stovepipe supervision and gain consistency out of the regional office. B. Bingham said that we haven't had any problems with personnel actions. The Board would still play a major role in reviewing the performance of the coordinator. Everyone B. Bingham supervises has performance standards tailored to specific locations.

-G. Bowser said that B. Carey has worked well. If it works perhaps we should stay with the same arrangement.

-B. Bingham said that some regions have all network coordinators supervised regionally (Midwest, Northeast Region).

Action Item: K. McMurry made a motion that supervision of the coordinator is moved to the IMR Regional I+M Coordinator. K. Brown seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with D. Perkins and B. Bingham abstaining. Motion carries that supervision is transferred to the IMR I+M regional coordinator at the beginning of the next fiscal year with the chance to revisit the issue as needed. A letter of thanks will also be sent from the Board to B. Carey thanking him for his role.

- III. D. Perkins made a presentation of Phase I Report Content and Organization
 - A. Chapter I – Ecological Context – Content presented.

- B. Chapter II – Conceptual Models – Content presented.
- C. Proposed Appendices presented.
- D. Schedule for Review – Phase I report will be about 40 pages in length with over 100 pages of appendices. D. Perkins presented a timeline for review and asked for comments and if the Board also wanted to review the document. D. Perkins said that he hoped we could agree on content of the report today.
 - A. Miller stated that the previous submissions have been of high quality so he did not think the Board and Technical Committee needed a lengthy review.
 - B. Bingham asked if D. Perkins would provide some instructions or a list of questions to facilitate the review process. B. Bingham has seen other networks that produced Phase 1 into 2 volumes. If SOPN staff has some specific things for people to review it might help. D. Perkins said that he would incorporate some instructions/guidance. B. Bingham said the real feedback at the national level will be on your conceptual models.
 - Action Item – SOPN will get the Phase I Report to the Technical Committee and Board by August 31. Comments will be due to D. Perkins by COB on September 21. A conference call will be set up sometime between September 21 and 23. Report will be submitted to WASO on September 30. D. Perkins emphasized that if you can get comments earlier that would help. A copy will be sent to the Board for review.**
 - G. Willson noted that we have an appendix for invasive plants, but not for invasive animals, and noted that the wording should be changed to exotic. **Action Item: D. Perkins said we would add an appendix for exotic animals and change the name of the other appendix to exotic plants.**
 - B. Bingham asked how we are treating GPRA Goals. D. Perkins said that we will have the 3 major ones relate to I+M in Chapter 1 and then look at the webpage of GPRA Goals and include in the appendix ones that we can assist with.

- IV. Strategic Plan – Last year the Board requested that D. Perkins develop a strategic plan to get us to Phase III report.
 - D. Perkins apologized for this not getting the plan done earlier in the year. The content of the plan was briefly presented.
 - G. Bowser asked if the Strategic Plan was based on the assumption that you will not receive funding for SAND. D. Perkins said yes, eventually. B. Bingham said that WASO has said repeatedly that funds will eventually come through for the additional parks. D. Perkins said that he has tried to put notes in the workplan to document where we are using SOPN money for the 11th park.
 - G. Willson noted that when Congress passes a budget it does not includes additional money for I&M and CESUs.
 - D. Perkins noted that some networks have hired ecologists early on. We decided as a network that we would not hire another permanent

person until we selected our vital signs. Instead we are using our cooperative agreements with universities to meet our staffing needs.

-G. Bowser suggested that the plan reflect your savings and in-kind contributions as you go along.

-G. Willson suggested including a section on interactions with other networks such as exchanging information and joint monitoring.

-B. Bingham noted that he started putting a heavy emphasis on Strategic Plans for the Phase III Reports so we had cohesion among networks.

-Action Item – Comments on the Strategic Plan will be due to D. Perkins by September 21.

- V. Other Concerns – Moved ahead of Item VI from the agenda.
 - A. Number of meetings and communication between SOPN and BOD – D. Perkins noted that there were several meetings earlier in the year and not as many as the year progressed, probably due to getting our direction for the year early. He asked if the level of communication was acceptable. The consensus was the level of communication was appropriate.
- VI. SOPN staff left the room for evaluation of SOPN staff by Board and Technical Committee.